

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DHA-02 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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AMCONGEN HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3265

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

FOL MSG FROM UDORN SENT ACTION BANGKOK INFO VIENTIANE 10 FEB
IS REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 0035

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TH, LA
SUBJECT: LAO REFUGEE PILOTS COMMENT ON WAR AGAINST MEO

REF: UDORN 0007

1. CONSUL INTERVIEWED FEBRUARY 8 THREE FORMER RLAF PILOTS
WHO FLED TO THAILAND RECENTLY REGARDING PRESENT SITUATION IN
LAOS. TWO OF PILOTS, 1/LT. MAQANE VONGKINGKEO AND 1/LT.
BOONMY MEKHAGNOMADARA, WERE 0-1 LIGHT OBSERVATION PILOTS WHO
EXCAPED LAOS IN THEIR AIRCRAFT, LANDING ATSUDORN RTAFB
JANUARY 14 AND 19 RESPECTIVELY. THIRD PILOT, BOONTERM
MALAIKHAM, FLEW C-123 AIRCRAFT IN LAOS BUT ENTERED THAILAND BY
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CROSSING MEKONG RIVER IN BOAT WASTSDECEMBER. ALL THREE MEN
LEFT WIVES AND CHILDREN BEHIND IN VIENTIANE.

2. IN OUR DISCUSSION, PILOTS TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT LPDR
EFFORT TO PUT DOWN MEO RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. TWO 0-1
PILOTS NOTED THAT THEY HAVE SPENT MOST OF PAST NINE MONTHS
FLYING AIR SUPPORT MISSIONS FOR OPERATIONS AGAINST MEO

TRIBESMEN CONTINUING TO RESIST AUTHORITY OF NEW VIENTIANE GOVERNMENT. 1 LTS. MEUANE AND BOONMY SAID THEY BEGAN FLYING SUCH MISSIONS LAST JUNE (1976) IN VICINITY OF PHOU MA THAO MOUNTAIN (COORDINATES UF 9863), BORIKHANE PROVINCE. THEY INDICATED THAT GROUND TROOPS CONDUCTING OPERATIONS WERE PRIMARILY PATHET LAO REGULARS SUPPLEMENTED BY FORMER RLA TROOPERS WHO HAD COMPLETED POLITICAL SEMINAR TRAINING.

3. 1/LTS. MEUANE AND BOONMY STATED THAT SEVERAL MONTHS LATER AREA OF THEIR FLYING MISSIONS SHIFTED NORTHWARD TO MUANG MOC (COORDINATES UF 9591), MUANG MO (COORDINATES UG 8807), AND NAM KEO (COORDINATES TK 1852), ALL IN EASTERN XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE-AND LATER SOUTHWARD TO BANNDO (COORDINATES VH 4682), NEAR BORDER OF BORIKHANE AND KHAMMOUANE PROVINCES. 1/LT. MEUANE CLAIMED THAT TROOPS HE SUPPORTED IN THESE AREAS CONSISTED OF BOTH PATHET LAO AND NORTH VIETNAMESE. HE SAID NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN THESE AREAS ARE CONSIDERABLE, NOTING ESTIMATED SIX BATTALIONS OF VIETNAMESE IN MUANG MO AREA AND ANOTHER BATTALION, WHICH HE IDENTIFIED AS 434 OR 444, DEPLOYED NEAR BAN DO.

4. 1/LT. MEUANE ADDED THAT HE ALSO BELIEVED THERE ARE VERY LARGE NUMBERS OF VIETNAMESE TROOPS, WHICH HE ESTIMATED AS NUMBERING ABOUT TWO DIVISIONS, DISPERSED THROUGH XIENG KHOUANG, BORIKHANE, AND KHAMMOUANE PROVINCES. HE SAID THAT SOME OF THESE TROOPS HAVE MOVED FROM AREA OF BAN KAPOP (COORDINATES VF 6116), IN NORTHERN KHAMMOUANE PROVINCE, TOWARDS PROVINCES MEKONG RIVER BORDER AND ARE PRESENTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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DEPLOYED IN VICINITY OF COORDINATES VF 2401.

5. 1/LTS. MEUANE AND BOONMY STATED THAT DURING PAST SEVERAL MONTHS PRIOR TO THEIR ESCAPE TO THAILAND THEY HAD BEEN FLYING OUT OF VAN VIENG AIRBASE NORTH OF VIENTIANE IN SUPPORT OF ANTI-MEB OPERATIONS BEING CONDUCTED IN AREA OF LONG CHIENG (COORDINATES TG 6920) PHU BIA (COORDINATES UF 0699) PHONE SAI (COORDINATES TF 5599) AND BAN XON (COORDINATES TF 6593). 1/LT. BOONMY ADDED THAT DURING RECENT COURIER TRIP TO SOUTHERN LAOS,

HE OBSERVED MANY VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS IN AND

AROUND SARAVANE PROVINCE CAPITAL AND A FEW VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN ATTOPEU PROVINCE CAPITAL.

6. C-123 PILOT 1/LT BOONTERM SAID THAT HE SPENT PAST YEAR FLYING OUT OF VIENTIANE AND VANG VIENG AIRBASE. WHEN OPERATING FROM FORMER BASE LAST SUMMER HE FLEW SUPPORT

MISSIONS IN MUANG MOC AND MUANG MO AREAS, SOMETIMES MAKING DAILY 15-TON RICE DROPS TO TROOPS IN FIELD FIGHTING MEO. HE SAID THAT HE ALSO FLEW OCCASIONALLY TO HANO, MOSTLY TO FERRY AMMUNITION, EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES TO VIENTIANE. 1/LT. BOONTERM STATED FROM VANG VIENG HE FLEW TROOPS, AMMUNITION, ARTILLERY WEAPONS, AND SUPPLIES TO SUPPORT DRIVE AGAINST MEO LONG CHIENG AREA.

7. 1/LTS. MEUANE AND BOONMY CLAIMED THAT LPDR CAMPAIGN TO PUT DOWN MEO RESISTANCE HAS BEEN A BRUTAL ONE. THEY SAID THAT PL/VIETNAMESE TROOPS, IN ADDITION TO ENGAGING MEO TRIBESMEN IN COMBAT, HAVE BURNED DOWN MEO VILLAGES, SLAUGHTERING THEIR LIVESTOCK, AND DESTROYED THEIR CROPS. BOTH PILOTS ADMITTED THEY HAD FIRED 2.75 ROCKETS FROM THEIR AIRCRAFT INTO MEO VILLAGES IN SUPPORT OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. SOMETIMES THEY AVERAGED AS MUCH AS SIX OR SEVEN COMBAT SORTIES A DAY. THEY INDICATED THAT CASUALTIES AMONG MEO NON-CONFIDENTIAL

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COMBATIVE POPULATION HAVE BEEN HIGH.

8. THEY NOTED THAT POSITION OF MEO WHO OPPOSE VIENTIANE GOVERNMENT APPEARS HOPELESS. MEO HAVE FEW WEAPONS, LACK AMMO AND OTHER VITAL SUPPLIES, AND ARE USUALLY OUT-NUMBERED. YET THEY CONTINUE TO RESIST ALTHOUGH THEY ARE GRADUALLY RETREATING TO MORE REMOTE AND INACCESSIBLE MOUNTAIN AREAS.

9. 1/LTS. MEUANE AND BOONMY SAID THERE ARE SIX 0-1S AND TWO T-41S STILL IN USE BY LPDR. SPARE PARTS FOR THESE AIRCRAFT ARE OBTAINABLE PRIMARILY BY CANNIBALIZING OTHERS DOWN FOR REPAIR BUT THIS SOURCE OF SUPPLY IS ABOUT EXHAUSTED. 1/LT BOONTERM SAID THAT ONLY TWO C-123S IN FLYING CONDITION IN LPDR.

10. COMMENT: STATEMENTS BY 0-1 PILOTS, IF ACCURATE, PROVIDE A REVEALING GLIMPSE AT GRIM LITTLE WAR LPDR AUTHORITIES AND THEIR VIETNAMESE ALLIES ARE WAGING AGAINST STUBBORN MEO TRIBESMEN WHO REFUSE TO ACCEPT NEW GOVERNMENT IN VIENTIANE. IT IS A WAR THAT FEW IN OUTSIDE WORLD ARE APPARENTLY AWARE OF AND, REGRETFULLY, EVEN IF IT WERE MORE WIDELY KNOWN, PERHAPS EVEN FEWER WOULD CARE ABOUT. PILOTS REMARKS WERE THAT SOONER OR LATER MOE RESISTANCE LEADERS MUST BOW TO INEVITABLE AND ACKNOWLEDGE AUTHORITY OF COMMUNIST REGIME. FAILURE TO DO SO WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY INVITE FURTHER DESTRUCTION OF MEO PEOPLE. WHATEVER FUTURE MAY BRING, MEO ALREADY APPEAR TO HAVE EARNED TRAGIC DISTINCTION OF BEING FOREMOST CASUALTIES IN LAOS OF LOST WAR WITH COMMUNIST REVOLUTIONARIES. FINNEY

UNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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